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Jiminy Cricket, An Unsound Moral Dictator? Implications of Conscience on Identity and Moral Psychology

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Abstract

This paper inquires into how one's ability to explore and grasp moral truth are affected by the faculty of conscience found in William Lyons' Personal Integrity Account of Conscience (PIAC), an account which attempts to resolve the problematic conceptions of conscience given by Locke and Freud. It will be demonstrated that considerable risk and potential damage towards our abilities to grasp moral truth exist in such accounts that manifest conscience in such a dangerously solidified and personal way, and that such consciences ought to be avoided. Following this, it will be demonstrated how other accounts of conscience, specifically the accounts of Peter Fuss and consciences which utilize positive reinforcement instead of the positive punishment to motivate adherence to their principles, preserve one's abilities to explore and grasp moral truth, and are thus preferable to the accounts of Lyons, Freud, and Locke.

Keywords: Conscience, Moral Psychology, Philosophical Psychology, Moral Epistemology, Operant Conditioning, Positive Reinforcement, Freud, Locke

Taken on its own, the concept of conscience, of an internal intuitive conviction of right and wrong, may often be assumed to be a good and admirable attribute for the possessor of said conscience. Many may instinctually link the term with the fictional animated character of

Jiminy Cricket, a friendly, warmhearted, and well-intentioned moral guide who provides one with advice and wisdom in a noble attempt to steer them clear of moral error and danger. But upon further analysis, should this concept of conscience truly be welcomed with open arms as a beneficial faculty for our grasp of true moral principles? Are we right to trust this seemingly cordial cricket? Does a deep moral and epistemic danger lie within Jiminy? Historical secular inquiries into conscience, such as those by Locke and Freud, have presented troublesome accounts of conscience. William Lyons has considered such past thought in his own contemporary framework known as the personal integrity account of conscience (PIAC), one which attempts to save the soundness of conscience for humans which are fully developed and morally mature. But does the PIAC truly succeed in saving conscience? Upon presentation and consideration of PIAC, this paper will demonstrate the considerable risks that exist in this framework of conscience, and subsequently argue that our faculties for moral thought and judgement ought not be manifested within us in such a solidified and personal way. Following this, it will consider alternative conceptions of conscience which may prove to be preferable to the accounts of Locke, Freud, and Lyons, specifically those of Peter Fuss as well as conceptions which utilize positive reinforcement rather than positive punishment to motivate adherence from their possessors.

We will begin by analyzing Lyon's framework of the PIAC. As aforementioned, Lyons considers past accounts of conscience from Locke and Freud when forming his reformulated framework of conscience, and thus, an overview of these accounts, as well as an overview of the issues of these historical frameworks that Lyons identifies, is in order.

Locke, in considering the abrupt disparities and differences between the consciences of different people and cultures of the world, affirmed that conscience was not an innate form of

knowledge or ability, but rather, an externally/socially derived set of moral conviction implanted onto one's initial blank slate of knowledge, known as one's *Tabula Rasa* (Locke, 1998, 276-282), by the external, empirical, and social environment. For Locke, such a conscience was not necessarily rooted in truth, but merely based on the external social constructs and moral convictions that the individual was exposed to, ones which may or may not prescribe actual moral truths, leading to an obvious risk for moral misleadings and outright falsehoods in such a conscience (Locke, 1716, 29-34).

Freud, who also affirms an externally derived and determined conscience, proves to be of a perspective similar to Locke. Freud however, ties the external derivation of one's conscience specifically to the experiences of parental authority, praise, and blame during infancy and childhood, experiences which are affirmed to prescribe a moral code, one which eventually manifests internally within the individual as a described *Super-Ego principle* of moral ideals. This superego principle is presented as counteracting innate impulsive drives for immediate pleasure (the *Id* principle), through the mediation of a balancing faculty known as the *Ego principle*. For Freud, the concept of moral conscience is this developed *Superego*, which, like Locke's account of conscience, is also externally derived, not necessarily from any sound truth, but merely from the parental authority and demands which accompanied one's childhood, which may or may not have been of truthful quality. Freud ascribes that such an acquired *Superego*, be it high quality or low quality in regards to truth, persists into the moral thought of one's adulthood (Dimmock & Fisher, 2017, 163-165).

Lyons makes note of specific aspects of these two historical frameworks of conscience which make conscience problematic and throw its moral soundness into question. It is noted

that such accounts deny any internal development or basis for one's conscience, and instead base conscience on external sources and influences of which there is no assurance of moral truth. The moral truthfulness of one's conscience in such frameworks is contingent on how rooted in moral truth one's external influences happened to be. Lyons also identifies a passive element of such frameworks from the fact that they deny any active role of the individual on the external influences which form their conscience. Under such accounts, one must passively accept and submit to such external forces without any ability to alter, change, or filter this acquisition process. Lastly, Lyons describes that an affective element necessarily exists within such accounts of conscience, noting that the externally acquired rules and expectations in such consciences enforce accordance from an individual by introducing a sense of discomfort, displeasure, and/or pain whenever the individual acts against the externally derived moral rules ascribed by the conscience. For example, should Rosa's externally derived conscience affirm that theft is a moral wrong, in the event that Rosa shoplifts a local liquor store, the dissonance between Rosa's action and the prescription(s) of her conscience, a conscience that she is unconditionally aware of at some level, be it consciously or unconsciously, will cause an uneasiness and discomfort within her, one which she cannot avoid due to the fact that she has no control over the acquisition/establishment of this conscience or its moral prescriptions due to the aforementioned passive acquisitional element of this conscience. Despite its external social or parental origins, it ultimately remains *her* conscience, and to act against the principles it ascribes consequently means to act against one's own conscience, an act which is necessarily destabilizing, uncomfortable, and wrenching. It is this affective quality and ability of conscience, one which Lyons describes as authoritarian, that necessarily condemns the possessor of the

conscience to it (Lyons, 2009, 482-488). Through such frameworks, it is demonstrated that in an environment of vicious external moral sources/experiences, a conscience of potentially vicious moral principles could indeed be externally implanted in an individual and solidified within them through an authoritative affective power, one which the individual ultimately cannot prevent or reverse, and one which will obstruct their abilities to acquire moral truth and to act in accordance with moral truth.

In an attempt to save the credibility of conscience from the pessimism and doubt of such frameworks, Lyons presents the *personal integrity account of consciousness* (PIAC). This account, taking consideration of Jean Piaget's and Lawrence Kohlberg's influential theories on developmental psychology, ascribes that while it may indeed be the case that young, developing, and morally immature children have externally and passively acquired conscience as described by Locke and Freud, one eventually reaches a developmental point in adolescence in which they are capable of their own critical and individual thought, a type of thought which can go against and reject previously accepted societal and parental norms and influences. With such an ability, the individual becomes capable of replacing such an external and passive conscience with a new conscience which they play an active role in constructing. In this, they are able to choose which external ideas and inputs are manifested within them and which are rejected (Lyons, 2009, 490-493).

The actively thinking individual is said to assess the potential moral principles and ideas which they come across. Subsequently, through an active consideration of these encountered ideas, the individual is said to decide which ideas they take as genuinely true moral principles

which they should and subsequently will form a deep commitment to, a commitment which entails incorporating adherence to such moral principles into their personality and identity as a person. For example, should a morally mature agent decide that the moral principle of generosity towards others is a true one, they will commit to it by instilling in themselves an identity of being a generous person who is committed to expressing generosity. Through this manifestation in the person's identity, a new affective element of conscience is brought about, since acting against such principles now consequently leads to feelings of contradiction and dissonance with one's identity in the sense of a *personal* failure. If the aforementioned person acts non-generously after committing to generosity, they now consequently violate the identity committed to generosity that they formed. Through the establishment of such a principle-based identity, one has no choice but to feel personally violated when they act against such principles. Lyons however, seems to suggest that this is an acceptable improvement from the accounts of Locke and Freud, since this authoritarian affective power reinforces a conscience that was carefully and deliberately installed by the agent through their own internal and mature moral contemplation (Lyons, 2009, 191-194).

However, in consideration of this reformed account of conscience development, while the PIAC may indeed provide a conscience which is preferable to the Freudian and Lockean accounts, uncertainty and risk for being morally misguided by one's conscience still exist. After all, even if the formation of the PIAC's conscience is an active and reflective one by the individual, there still remains no guarantee of moral truth in what the individual actively *perceives* and *selects* as morally true. There may perhaps be more accuracy than the passive intake of conscience from external sources that Locke and Freud described, but as finite beings and thinkers,

even when the utmost carefulness is applied to our thinking and moral assessments, risk for error still persists.

This alone is not necessarily a complete achilles heel for PIAC, but in consideration of PIAC's retention of an affective element of the developed conscience, it becomes clear that in such a framework, there is not merely risk of simply making a mistake in perceiving what is morally true, but of such a mistake to then be forged into one's personal identity and given an affective enforcing element which the person is at that point, unable to escape. Consider for example, if in actively constructing their conscience, one mistakenly perceives the practice of eugenics as being a good and true moral principle, and subsequently incorporates it into their personal identity, becoming a personally committed and steadfast advocate for eugenics programs. To attempt to abandon the erroneous idea of eugenics would now mean to go against this established self-identity, and experience the painful dissonance which follows a contradiction with one's identity. Thus, this affective element, which stems from the solidification of actively chosen moral principles into one's identity, maintains the risk of condemning an individual to a morally vicious identity and conscience based on mistaken principles, a condemnation which then, through the affective element, prevents, or at least greatly interferes with, one's ability to acquire and practice moral truth. In other words, PIAC simply allows one to choose their own moral dictators of conscience through solidification in identity, and a poor choice here can trap one in a vicious cage.

Such risks that arise from conscience solidifying itself into personal identity prove to have many parallels with the epistemic concerns discussed by Quassim Cassam regarding vicious self-conceptions. In considering epistemic vices (practices and habits which obstruct one's

ability to acquire knowledge, such as moral knowledge) Cassam notes that firmly established self-conceptions may often prove exceptionally stubborn and resistant towards considerations of any ideas which call them into doubt and threaten their continued existence (Cassam, 2019, 147-149). If an Evangelical Christian priest for example, mistakenly yet firmly believes through a committed conviction that they are a morally and socially good member of their community because of their steadfast political allegiance to Donald Trump, such strong convictions may make it hard or impossible for them to accept or even recognize sound arguments and evidence which suggest that they are not a good member of their community, that the moral, social, and political principles that they committed to in life practice and identify are false, and that such principles are actually detrimental to their community. Cassam's analysis of this issue further highlights how the manifestation of firm, inflexible, self-conception/identity in a person can obstruct their epistemic abilities to make realizations of themselves and truth in general, including moral truth. Such obstructionism subsequently interferes with one's ability to make moral progress and revisions to their finite and limited grasp of morality and truth.

The considerations of such risks in the PIAC's framework suggests that such an attachment of potential moral truths to solidified personal identity through conscience is one that should be avoided should one wish to maximally minimize such condemning potentials of moral error. One may question whether such an assessment roots itself in an epistemic skepticism that insists on needlessly high standards of certainty rather than practicality in attaining moral truth. After all, couldn't the PIAC lead to good outcomes most of the time if people were careful enough with what they were committing to? Would such new demands for certainty be setting unattainable epistemic standards that prevent any attainment of moral knowledge?

To this, it should be noted that an abandonment of such a personal conscience does not necessarily entail an impossibility of acquiring moral truth. Rather, a different method is in order, one which does indeed entail assessing potential moral principles, but does not entail ever implementing any kind of full commitment or personal indoctrination of such principles into identity. One can indeed, through reason, find probable belief that a moral principle is true, while still maintaining an openness to any new, seemingly better (through reason) alternate principles. Doing this however, entails refraining from any absolute commitment to any principle(s) as well as any incorporation of such principles into one's personal identity/conscience. We must hold what we take as true at an arm's distance away, one which permits further questioning and revision of said apparent truth. Any complete embracements and solidifications into identity lead to an inflexible static state which does not provide an open mindedness for revision.

We of course lose all potential for true moral principles to be permanently solidified through an authoritarian affective element. But as finite imperfect thinkers, it would be foolish to take any of our beliefs as deserving such a status. One could have strong belief that Bernie Sanders would be a great president, but they would be foolish if they took this to be an unquestionable truth, and affirmed from this that Sanders should be the permanent and authoritarian Platonic philosopher king of the US. Even in the strongest of convictions, attempts to establish such permanence should be avoided for our own epistemic and moral good. We must realize that our finite capabilities of thought and assessment may indeed be missing something, regardless of how much perceived certainty we sense them. We should wish to always maintain an ability for revision, similar to the revision abilities voters retain in regards to term bound

elected officials, abilities which they lose when permanently solidified and empowered dictators are put into place. To avoid such dangerous permanent solidification of thought, we must avoid solidifying thought into identity-based conscience.

One may question whether it is metaphysically possible to truly separate belief from identity due to all thought seeming to have a necessary connection to its thinker through an act of *I think*. One may also question whether identity is considerably altered, or perhaps becomes empty, if moral belief and conviction are taken away from it. To this first question, the act of *I think* should be distinguished from an act of thinking *I am*. One can of course think about and consider the political framework of anarcho-syndicalism without becoming an anarcho-syndicalist in committed personal identity. In such an act, they identify as simply the thinker, the *I*, nothing more. The act of thinking *I am*, which this objection alludes to, is not necessarily present in all such thought. From these considerations, the objects of thought do not appear to automatically manifest into identity, and thus, the proposed practice of assessment without commitment appears to be possible cognition wise.

In relating this observation to the second question, it seems as though this identity of simply a *thinker* is the most fundamental identity which remains from this proposed practice, as if that identity was not present, it would seem as though all thought would cease to exist. In other words, the occurrence of all thought seems to require the thinking subject to realize and regard itself as the thinker who is doing the thinking at hand. This considerably strips down permanence of identity, but in such an identity, devoid of absolute static commitment to any moral principle(s) or thought(s), one becomes the freest in their potential for exploring the vast frontiers of thought and possibility.

This freedom is a pinnacle highlight in this alternative to and rejection of the PIAC's identity based and solidified conscience. Interestingly, such a state of continuously active moral inquiry can actually be argued as pertaining closer and more directly to the identified developmental state of Piaget and Kohlberg's theories than the PIAC does. If the general framework of developmental stages affirmed in theories hold merit, which empirical considerations in 21st century psychology have suggested (Kuhn, 2008, 48-55), the identified period of intellectual maturity during adolescence and early adulthood is an incredibly remarkable and applaudable state. It proves to be a state in which the individual becomes empowered to reject questionable static states of moral thinking that the status quo forces of their childhood previously instilled them with, a state in which there is not merely reflections upon pre-existing rules and notions of morality, but rather, a self-directed management of reason which seeks to determine and establish the rules themselves, and most notably, a state in which the individual takes full charge of their moral and intellectual agency, realizing that a responsibility for choice through their own actively directed thought in each present moment has now presented itself to them in a moment of immense empowerment.

Philosophers should be commending of this wonderful human psychological state, one which encompasses abilities and realizations that encompass the very spirit of philosophy, a spirit of realizing one's ignorance and leaving no stone unturned in one's actively self-determined explorative pursuit for truth, truth which will attempt to fill that void of ignorance. Yet, rather than fully embrace this marvelous state of human intellectual capacity in itself, the PIAC treats it as merely a means to a further intended end of a static conscience, of a 'mature', stable, and solidified state and identity of thinking, which, after being solidified in the individual,

through its affective element, counters any further fluctuation or exploration of moral thought through the affective power it has gained through solidification in identity. Under the PIAC's proposed framework, one gains the amazing freedom and ability to break away from static thought, only to use that ability to revert back to a new and potentially damning dictatorial conscience of their own creation.

PIAC insists on the creation of a solidified conscience, and in doing so, oversteps this ideal state of human capability, affirming that this youthful vigor and ability of intellectual revolution must necessarily be tamed by an eventual solidified identity-based conscience. What should instead be advocated for is maintaining oneself in the very stage which Piaget identified, one without solidified conscience. It of course may be more *comfortable* to exist in a stable state of solidified conscience. Feelings of stability and certainty are easier to live with than feelings of continuous uncertainty and unsolved questions. Consequently, one may instinctively seek to return to a new stability of conscience once the conscience of childhood is rejected. But in deciding *not* to pursue a new solidified conscience after a rejection of the old, and deciding to instead stay in a youthful dynamic process of constantly questioning, pursuing, and actively grasping truth, one is empowered with the highest of epistemic abilities and flexibilities which enable them to rebel against previous erroneous beliefs without any contradiction or dissonance, allowing the individual and their beliefs to be always malleable and changeable when new realizations towards previously unknown truth are made. Those who solidify themselves and their thoughts into the static conscience described by the PIAC become the stale old-timers

who contribute nothing more to moral progress. But those who reject any commitments or permanent loyalty to a solidified conscience become the free philosophical trailblazers who push moral and human progress further to greater heights through unrestrained revision of thought.

In consideration of these demonstrations, if one values truth, they should aim not for a solidified conscience, but rather, for the maintenance of their youthful malleability and freedom from solidified conscience. One may perhaps worry that this liberation from personal dictatorships of static solidified conscience makes us too free and gullible to false moral principles, and that much moral error might be actualized through such persistent and liberal epistemic freedom. But even in such a case, such potentially vicious Jiminy Crickets of static and authoritative conscience will not be there to chain us down in a pit of falsehood through identity, and we as free dynamic thinkers will maintain an ability to fix such errors without being leashed down by the affective chains of a static conscience. If one is capable, one must learn to leave such a solidified Jiminy Cricket behind.

It is clear at this point that this kind described type of active intellectual and cognitive freedom for the exploration of moral thought is both preferable to, and incompatible with, accounts of solidified conscience found in the PIAC, the account of Locke, and the account of Freud. However, a question that may still remain to be asked is whether this kind of active and preferable cognitive state can still be found and/or made compatible with other conceptions and understandings of conscience that do not affirm conscience as being a static, solidified entity that brings about inner anguish the moment any dissonance or disobedience towards it occurs.

A very different, more general, and arguably much simpler, notion of conscience that one may consider is the theory of conscience put forth by Peter Fuss. Fuss defines conscience as a relation within an individual that simply disposes the individual to act in accordance with their current moral knowledge and belief. As highlighted by Fuss, in being simply a linking mechanism between one's action and moral thought, this conception of a conscience does not prescribe any specific individual set of moral knowledge/thought to the individual, and in fact, has no influence at all on the moral code that one forms for themselves. As emphasized by Fuss, the dispositional influence of this conception of conscience is much more general in that it established an internal obligation that one must act in accordance with whatever they know/judge to be good/right at any specific present moment. Fuss' conscience has nothing to do with the content of such present judgements. Unlike the previously considered conceptions of conscience, Fuss' conception does not invoke any kind of static solidification and commitment to a set of moral principles. It allows room and ability for change, growth, and revision in one's judgement of morality in the moment, requiring only that one act in accordance with whatever revised moral judgement that they happen to change to (Fuss, 1964, 116-120).

For example, Vlad, in his early adult years, may judge heavy drinking at social events to be an overall good/justified thing to do for the sake of increased sociability and enjoyment at such parties. Later on in his life though, he may come to a different judgement, and judge that excessive drinking at such events is an inappropriate habit that should be avoided and discouraged. Fuss' account of conscience affirms that in both periods, since Vlad was acting in accordance with what he genuinely judged as morally good in each present moment, Vlad was acting

in accordance with his conscience. No violation of said conscience ever occurred since this conception of conscience has no solidified tie or commitment to any one set of moral principles. Fuss' conception recognizes the reality that one often progresses through many different and revised grasps on moral principles through time, and Fuss' conscience is consequently open to all possible sets of moral principles that an individual is able to consider and judge as good/justified through their exploration of and progression through moral understanding over time. Thus, in avoiding personal commitment to any single solidified set of moral principles, Fuss' account appears compatible with the free and malleable ability for moral exploration and revision that we established. Perhaps then, for the sake of preserving this valuable ability, conscience need not be thrown out, but rather, reformulated into a more general conception similar to Fuss', one which is ultimately indifferent towards and tolerant of movement, exploration, and progression through different sets of moral principles.

One may question whether this affirmed 'obligation' in Fuss' account towards being in accordance with what judges to be good/just in a present moment interferes in any way with judgement in a subsequent moment. If for example, Ivan currently judges monster truck shows to be the greatest form of entertainment available to man (position A), will such a presently held belief get in the way of learning/realizing later that less destructive and less gas guzzling forms of entertainment are better than such shows (position B)? Closer inspection suggests this would not be the case though, since the obligation and accordance here is always left entirely contingent on one's present and active judgement of the current evidence of positions. The moment that active judgement and reason realize that the evidence and reasons for position B are greater than for position A, the obligation of accordance switches over. The only thing that

would interfere with such a transition would be if the individual had become attached to position A manifested a personal commitment to position A in the way that PIAC has outlined. As long as such personal commitment is avoided, the obligation and accordance of Fuss 'framework appear to be unproblematic.

With Fuss 'account and its compatibility with freedom in moral thought established, it is also worth considering whether a conscience which is more morally assertive than Fuss 'account and less threatening, punishing, and dictatorial conscience that the PIAC might be able to be formulated. To achieve and enforce the solidified moral principles it bases itself on, the PIAC's conscience presents itself as being awfully focused on painfully discouraging and punishing deviance from its principles. Hendrik Stoker notes that other conceptions of conscience also seem hyper focused on what is deemed as deviant, bad, and evil towards the conscience's moral principles, highlighting that while many conceptions of conscience ascribe painful feelings and experiences towards what the conscience affirms as being morally abnormal and evil, rarely does there seem to be any feeling explicitly identified and ascribed to normal and good adherence to a conscience's affirmed principles (Stoker, 2018, 274-275). In other words, while there appears to be plenty of punishment, discomfort, and fear applied to disobedience of conscience, there does not appear to be much reward for obedience to it. Under these kinds of frameworks, rather than having something to look forward to and pursue, a possessor of conscience is only ascribed as having something to fear and avoid.

To further discuss and explore how such frameworks of conscience motivate their possessors to adhere to their affirmed moral principles, it will prove useful to have a brief under-

standing of how the psychological behaviorist model of operant conditioning categorizes different types of conditioning/motivation that influences behavior. The operant conditioning model of psychological behaviorism affirms the following categories (Mixon, 1975, 45-46):

- **Positive Reinforcement:** a positive/pleasant stimulus is given to an individual when they adhere to the desired behavior. This reinforces/encourages adherence to the desired behavior. For example, a professor is given a positive and pleasant faculty member of the year recognition for displaying outstanding commitment to their students, and subsequently becomes motivated to keep up their good work.
- **Negative Reinforcement:** A negative/aversive stimulus that an individual is experiencing is withdrawn once the individual adheres to a desired behavior. This reinforces/encourages adherence to the desired behavior. For example, a car emits a negative/aversive beeping sound that is only withdrawn once an individual puts on their seatbelt. The individual is encouraged to put their seatbelt on in order to stop the beeping that annoys them.
- **Positive Punishment:** A negative/aversive stimulus is given to an individual when they exhibit an undesired behavior. This punishes/discourages adherence to the undesired behavior. For example, a criminal is given an aversive prison sentence after committing arson, and is subsequently discouraged from committing another arson crime.

- **Negative Punishment:** A positive/pleasant stimulus is taken away from an individual when they exhibit an undesired behavior. This punishes/discourages adherence to the undesired behavior. For example, a child's favorite toys are taken away after they throw a tantrum at the grocery store, and the child is discouraged from creating future scenes.

With these categories in mind, and this basic terminology established, we can observe that conceptions of conscience like the PIAC utilize a conditioning strategy of positive punishment in order to discourage undesired behaviors and thoughts in their possessors. When the possessor of a conscience exhibits the undesirable behavior of going against the moral affirmations of their conscience, the conscience, through its affective element, adds a negative/aversive stimulus of pain, discomfort, uneasiness, and feelings of contradiction with one's self-conception. With this, undesired behaviors and thoughts which differ/deviate from the moral principles of the conscience are discouraged, and the only behaviors and thoughts left un-discouraged are those which adhere to the conscience's moral principles.

But as seen through the different categories and options for motivation just described, positive punishment, and punishment in general, are not the only ways of influencing/conditioning behavior and thought. The practice of reinforcement is one that can also be utilized to achieve adherence to desired behavior and thought. Furthermore, the practice of positive reinforcement, unlike the described affective element of conscience found in frameworks such as the PIAC, does not impose fears and anxieties of pain, loss, or discomfort in an individual. Rather, in experiencing positive reinforcement, an individual only has something positive/pleasur-

able to gain. No risk of loss/pain exists. Furthermore, such reward through positive reinforcement encourages desired behavior and thought without actively punishing and discouraging deviant thought and behavior. With this in mind, if one was under a conscience which affirmed itself and its moral principles through positive reinforcement, such an individual would still be free to explore moral thought that deviates from their conscience's affirmations without being painfully punished.

Could a different kind of principle affirming conscience, one which achieves and motivates adherence to desired behaviors and thoughts in its possessors through positive reinforcement, and allows for a painless and active exploration of alternative moral thought be formulated? Some notable examples of real-world understandings of conscience suggest that this possible conception of a positive conscience is indeed what many hold and understand conscience as being. Paul Heck's consideration of the Islamic understanding of conscience known in contemporary Arabic as *damīr*, makes two interesting and relevant notes. The first being that Muslim understandings of *damīr* affirm that good utilization of this conscience entails an actively conscious deliberation of moral principles rather than a mere passive adherence/reception of externally/unconsciously affirmed principles. The second being that adherence to Muslim moral teachings, including adherence/utilization of *damīr* as well as a more general submission to God, is not seen as self-repression and fear driven constraint, but rather as a self-liberation and freedom that someone has the opportunity to positively gain for themselves (Heck, 2014, 300-305). There is no loss in this framework, only a positive reinforcement of gaining life enrichment through adherence to Islam's moral principles. This use of positive reinforcement in *damīr* instead of a fear and aversion based positive punishment, as well as the promotion of

conscious active engagement with morality, present *damīr* as a much-improved conception of conscience in comparison to the PIAC.

Furthermore, considerations in moral psychology regarding moral frameworks and their subsequent ethical-mindsets also provide insight into the idea of a positive conscience. Research on this topic, which has taken considerable influence and insights from Western moral philosophy, has observed the existence of two prominent types of ethical mindsets that influence an individual's conception of moral principles and their adherence to such principles. The first is a consequentialist/outcome-based mindset, which focuses its attention on the consequences of potential acts in its assessment of morality. The second is a deontological/rule-based mindset, which focuses its attention on perceptions of duties, rules, and obligations which the individual is obliged to fulfill and follow as a moral agent. While the term of mindset is used to describe the moral inclinations at hand in this psychological discussion, such differing ethical inclinations can be seen as descriptions of different types of consciences. In addition to this insightful distinction of ethical mindsets, such research has also demonstrated that individuals with deontological/rule-based mindsets were more likely to be more behaviorally consistent and allegiant to their moral principles in comparison to those with consequentialist/outcome-based mindset (Cornelissen et al., 2013, 482-487).

Such findings prove to give much food for thought for this paper's aforementioned deductions and considerations. The deontological/rule-based mindset, in affirming that there are rules and duties which the moral agent must follow, consequently appears to affirm that a failure to abide by the moral principles prescribed by such rules and duties deserves positive punishment in the form of the reception of guilt, mental anguish, and self-disgrace. In affirming it's

moral principles as necessary rules and duties for the moral agent, it affirms that these principles are the expected standard that one should live up to, ones which are consequently affirmed as defining the moral agent in a considerable way. By adhering to them, one is not acclaimed, praised, or rewarded as exceptional. Rather, they are seen as simply meeting expectations. Nothing beyond humbleness may be felt from the adherence of these moral principles, yet considerable pain and punishment may be received from a deviance away from them, and thus, despite the absence of positive reinforcement towards the affirmed moral ideals, the moral agent is still compelled to be behaviorally consistent to them.

A consequentialist/outcome-based mindset differs from the deontological/rule-based mindset in a few notable ways. First, it is concerned not with defining rules and duties which define and set expectations on the moral agent, but instead, analyzes the possibilities of consequences that an agent can bring about. Thus, since definition and expectation is not put on the moral agent, they do not experience the same senses of personal failure and disgrace that is experienced under the deontological/rule-based mindset, as there are no personal expectations that one can fail at meeting. Consequently, it appears as it would indeed be easier for one with a consequentialist/outcome-based mindset to deal with behavioral inconsistency towards affirmed moral principles, since less (or perhaps absolutely no) dissonance with the ideas of personal duty and definition is at stake for them. With this, they are much freer than possessors of a deontological/rule-based mindset to reject their presently held moral principles and progress to new ones.

Furthermore, in being focused on the possibilities of new and additional consequences that an agent can bring about, it seems as though a consequentialist/outcome-based mindset,

rather than presenting risks of personal loss for the moral agent, instead presents positively reinforcing consequential rewards and additions to the agent that are affirmed to come if the moral agent adheres to its moral principles. There is a good consequence to look forward to and be happy about for someone under a consequentialist/outcome-based mindset. Therefore, unlike the deontological/rule-based mindset, the consequentialist/outcome-based mindset seeks to achieve adherence to its principles by means beyond a painful positive punishment.

Of course, there may indeed still be an aspect of positive punishment to a consequentialist/outcome-based mindset, as deviance from its moral principles may entail experiencing bad and painful consequences as a result. There are two main considerations on this. First, it could be argued that such an experience of pain through external consequences simply does not match up with the pain experienced through feelings of inner self-failure and disgrace, and that consequently, one is still overall freer from moral solidification under a consequentialist/outcome-based mindset. Second, one could argue that unlike the inner pain experienced from a contradiction with one's formulated self-conception, a self-conception which may have problematic origins, external consequentialist pain from the outside world is a legitimate sign of moral wrong that should be adhered to. One may argue that such consequentialist pain, in being a guide towards moral learning and progress, is something one should not try to avoid and escape from. Perhaps one may even go further and say that it is impossible to completely escape such external consequentialist pain. However, viewing consequentialist pain as a legitimate moral guide may be disputed by non-consequentialist views on morality. Such considerations and debates would present us with very interesting and complex questions. However, while a further exploration and consideration of such questions and debates is definitely a task

worthy of undertaking, such further exploration would prove to be a bit beyond the main scope and focus of this paper, and as such, this will be as far as this paper goes in exploring them.

In considering conscience, this paper has considered the conception of conscience that Lyons 'Personal Integrity Account of Conscience presents, and demonstrated the problematic implications that would come from such a conscience that solidifies a way of moral thinking into our personal identity. It was subsequently affirmed that avoiding a solidification of conscience in such a personal way is necessary in order to protect our abilities to freely and painlessly explore moral thought and revise mistaken moral conclusions we have. From this, it was then explored how different conceptions of conscience, specifically Fuss 'account and consciences that enforce their principals through positive reinforcement rather than painful positive punishment, could accommodate this important ability to continue exploring moral thought unobstructed. One may conclude from this that while a solidified, dictatorial, positive punishment oriented Jiminy Cricket of conscience is not one that we can afford to trust, an alternative Jiminy Cricket of consciousness, one which does not obstruct us from actively exploring moral thought on our own, and which is oriented towards using positive reinforcement to motivate our adherence to its moral guidance, might be one which we can trust as a moral companion.

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